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Persisting Problems for a Quantificational Theory of Complex Demonstratives

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I wish to thank Jeffrey King for his thoughtful and challenging reply to my “Problems for a Quantificational Theory of Complex Demonstratives” (King forthcoming and Braun forthcoming b). I will comment here on some of his responses.¹

King (2001, 2008, forthcoming) holds that complex demonstratives are quantifier phrases. If they are quantifier phrases, then one might reasonably expect sentences containing them to exhibit certain scope ambiguities. But King also holds that complex demonstratives have a strong tendency to take wide scope with respect to negation, modal operators, and attitude verbs. Given this additional hypothesis, King’s view predicts that complex demonstratives almost always appear to behave like directly referential terms. Certain scope ambiguities are absent, or are very difficult to hear. Sentences containing complex demonstratives usually appear to have the same truth values and truth conditions as they do on direct reference theories. Of course, if these predictions are correct, then we should seriously consider the obvious alternative hypothesis, namely that complex demonstratives really are directly referential. King, however, thinks that complex demonstratives sometimes take narrow scope in certain sentences, and so

¹All references below to King’s work are to King’s reply (forthcoming), unless otherwise noted. I usually substitute my numbering of sentences for his. My numbering in this paper differs from the numbering in “Problems.”

these sentences have readings that are not predicted by direct-reference theories. In the last section of this paper, I will examine King's alleged narrow-scope cases and argue that they do not constitute serious problems for direct reference theories.

1. King's Objections to Direct Reference Theories

My purpose in "Problems" (Braun, forthcoming b) was to present criticisms of King's theory. I did not set out to defend direct-reference theories from his criticisms. I respond to some of these criticisms in my "Complex Demonstratives and Their Singular Contents" (forthcoming-b), henceforth "Singular". King's brings up some of his criticisms in his reply, so I will here give some hints as to how I respond to them. King claims that direct reference theories fail to account for some NDNS uses of complex demonstratives. I argue in "Singular" that King's NDNS criticisms rely on disputable (and disputed) claims about singular belief and the relations among semantic content, assertion, and belief, and so direct reference theorists have many options for reasonable replies, many of which I describe. King also says that direct-reference theories cannot explain the semantics of QI sentences. In "Singular" I present a semantic and pragmatic theory of QI sentences that is consistent with direct reference and that also explains why many speakers find many QI sentences odd.² King finally claims that direct reference theories cannot explain certain uses of complex demonstratives. I discuss these uses in "Singular," but I shall say more here.

Complex demonstratives have three distinct types of use, namely demonstrative, bound-

²Salmon (forthcoming) presents another theory of QI uses that is consistent with direct-reference theories of the demonstrative use of complex demonstratives.

variable, and anaphoric. The demonstrative type of use is exemplified when a speaker utters (1) and intends to use ‘that student’ to refer to a student on whom he has focused.

1. That student is smart.

The bound-variable use is exemplified by ordinary utterances of (2) (the subscripts indicate semantic dependence of some sort).

2. Every student₁ has a professor who thinks that student₁ is smart.

The anaphoric type of use is illustrated by utterances of (3).

3. A student₁ was sitting in the library. Another student₂ who had an iPod was sitting across from him₁. That student₂ had a logic book.

King (section 2) thinks that the latter two types of use raise problems for direct reference theories. He says “it cannot be claimed that the complex demonstrative contributes an individual to the proposition expressed by [(2)].” King imagines a world in which (3) is true, but says “Braun’s version of DRCD predicts that the third sentence [of (3)] can’t be true in such a case.”

One does get peculiar results if one extends my theory of complex demonstratives to the bound-variable and anaphoric types of use. But I intend my theory to apply only to the demonstrative type of use. I hold that the bound-variable and anaphoric types of use should receive separate semantic treatments, just as the bound-variable and anaphoric types of use of *pronouns* should receive separate treatments from the demonstrative type of use of pronouns. I also suspect that the best theory of the three uses of complex demonstratives will parallel the best theory of the three uses of pronouns. Let me explain.

Pronouns such as ‘he’ clearly have demonstrative, bound-variable, and anaphoric types of use, as illustrated in (4).

4. a. He is smart.
- b. Every male student₁ has a professor who thinks he₁ is smart.
- c. A student₁ was sitting in the library. Another student₂ who had an iPod was sitting across from him₁. He₂ had a logic book.

On my theory, complex demonstratives on their demonstrative use function semantically very much like pronouns on their demonstrative use. For instance, the semantic content of ‘he’ in a context, on its demonstrative use, is a male individual; its content does not include the property of being male. The semantic content of ‘that male’ on its demonstrative use is exactly the same, on my theory.³ Since (on my theory) ‘he’ and ‘that male’ are semantically similar on their demonstrative use, it is natural to expect them to share other types of use, and to function in semantically similar ways on those other uses. So given my theory, it is reasonable to think that the best theory of the three uses of complex demonstratives should parallel the best theory of the three uses of pronouns.

Most semanticists hold, at least implicitly, that ‘he’ on its demonstrative use is directly referential. Most hold that ‘he’ on its bound-variable use semantically functions as a bound variable. Semanticists disagree about the anaphoric use. Some think (roughly) that ‘he’ on its anaphoric use functions as a variable that is bound by a hidden quantifier. Others think (roughly) that it functions, on this use, like an unbound definite description or (other) quantifier phrase.⁴ On all such views, ‘he’ has more than one semantic function. Given the resemblance between

³However, ‘he’ and ‘that male’ differ in *structured character* (Braun 1994).

⁴For examples of bound variable views, see Kamp 1981, Heim 1981, Kamp and Reyle 1993, and Salmon 2006. For examples of description and quantifier theories, see Evans 1977 and 1980, King 1987, and Neale 1990.

the demonstrative uses of ‘he’ and ‘that male’, on my view, it is reasonable for me to think that complex demonstratives on their bound-variable and anaphoric uses have the same semantic functions as do pronouns on those same uses.

King (2001) argues against an ambiguity theory of complex demonstratives and in favor of a unified (non-ambiguity) theory of complex demonstratives. He suggests in his reply (and in King 2008) that complex demonstratives function semantically as quantifier phrases on all of their uses. I think we have good reason to expect a unified theory of complex demonstratives only insofar as we have good reason to expect a unified theory of pronouns. But we do not have good reason to expect a unified theory of pronouns (or at least not one that is unified in King’s sense). Moreover, I doubt that a plausible unified theory of pronouns treats them as quantifier phrases on all of their uses (no semanticist that I know of has proposed such a theory).⁵ Thus I doubt that the correct theory of complex demonstratives treats them uniformly as quantifier phrases on all of their uses.

I hasten to add that, for all I know, a tri-partite theory of pronouns and complex demonstratives is consistent with an overarching theory on which the three semantic functions are manifestations of a single (context-sensitive) linguistic meaning. But I do not have a clear idea of what such a theory would look like, and I will not attempt to formulate one here. (See “Singular,” section 6, for more on this topic.)

⁵King’s (1987) theory of pronouns does not treat the bound-variable use of ‘he’ as a quantifier phrase. Treating ‘he’ on its demonstrative use as a quantifier would be incompatible with the (seeming) obstinate rigidity of the term on this use.

2. Modal Existence Objections

I argued in “Problems” that King’s theory incorrectly predicts certain scope ambiguities in modal existence sentences. It will be helpful to review some background to my objection before looking at King’s reply.

Some rigid designators are more rigid than others. ‘George W. Bush’, for instance, is *obstinately rigid*: it designates George W. Bush with respect to all worlds, whether or not Bush exists at that world. By contrast, if ‘the thing that is actually a man who is identical with George W. Bush’ is a singular term, then it is (merely) *persistently rigid*: it designates George W. Bush with respect to all worlds in which he exists, but designates nothing with respect to worlds in which he does not exist.⁶ More generally, “The *F*” designates *o* at world *w* if *o* uniquely satisfies *F* at *w*; otherwise it designates nothing. All such definite descriptions, even those that are ‘actually’-rigidified, are merely persistent rigid designators, unless they happen to designate necessary existents (e.g., ‘the actual square root of two’). A parallel point holds if definite descriptions are quantifier phrases rather than genuine singular terms. Say that a definite description *determines* an object *o* at *w* iff *o* uniquely satisfies the definite description’s descriptive content at *w*. Then ‘the thing that is actually a man who is identical with George W. Bush’ determines George W. Bush in all worlds in which he exists, but determines nothing in those worlds in which he does not exist. It is a merely persistent determiner.⁷

The difference between obstinate rigid designation and merely persistent rigid designation

⁶Salmon (2005) introduced the distinction between obstinate and persistent rigid designation.

⁷I assume here, as does King, that definite descriptions are quantifiers and that quantifiers quantify at a world only over objects that exist at that world.

(or determination) makes no difference to the modal behavior of many sentences. But it does make a difference to negative existence sentences. Sentence (5) contains an obstinate rigid designator, and is not scope ambiguous (or if it is scope ambiguous, then its scope disambiguations are modally equivalent).⁸

5. George W. Bush does not exist.

But many sentences containing ‘actually’-rigidified definite descriptions are (truth-conditionally) scope ambiguous, for these descriptions are usually merely persistently rigid. For instance, (6a) is scope-ambiguous. The readings are given in (6b) and (6c).

6. a. The thing that is actually a man who is identical with Bush does not exist.
b. \sim [the x : actually (x is a man & x =Bush)] x exists.
c. [the x : actually (x is a man & x =Bush)] $\sim x$ exists.

(6b) is true at worlds at which George W. Bush does not exist. But (6c) is false at all worlds, including the actual world, for (6c) is true at a given world w only if something in w is actually a man who is identical with Bush and yet does not exist in w . But there is no such thing in w . So (6c) is necessarily false.

Let us now turn to a negative existence sentence containing a complex demonstrative. Is (7a) scope ambiguous?

7. a. That man does not exist.

Consider a context in which the agent perceives George W. Bush and uses the complex demonstrative in (7a) to refer to him. Does (7a) have a reading on which it is necessarily false in

⁸We can represent the disambiguations (if there are such) using (i) and (ii). (i) \sim Exists(b). (ii) $\lambda x[\sim$ Exists $x](b)$. These are true in exactly the same possible worlds.

this context? I think not. However, King's view predicts that (7a) is scope ambiguous, and that it is necessarily false on one of its readings (with respect to this context). The reading is given in (7c).

- 7. b. $\sim[\text{That}_{=\text{Bush}, \text{J}@} x : x \text{ is a man}] x \text{ exists.}$
- c. $[\text{That}_{=\text{Bush}, \text{J}@} x : x \text{ is a man}] \sim x \text{ exists.}$

On King's theory, (7b) and (7c) are modally equivalent to (6b) and (6c), respectively. So on his theory (7a) has a reading on which it expresses a necessarily false proposition, in this context.

This seems incorrect: (7a) seems unambiguous, and possibly true. Speakers who are well-trained to recognize scope ambiguities do not hear such a reading for (7a). This fact alone raises a modal problem for King's theory.

If (7a) has a reading on which it is necessarily false (in the above context), then we would naturally expect that some modal sentence that (roughly speaking) attributes possibility to it is false, when negation takes narrow scope. In "Problems" I chose to consider (8).

- 8. It could have been the case that that man failed to exist.

I used 'failed to exist' in order to force the negation to take narrow scope with respect to the modal operator and 'that man' (assuming that the latter is a scope-taking quantifier phrase). I argued that King's theory entails that (8) is ambiguous: it has a reading in which 'that man' takes wide-scope with respect to the modal operator, and another reading on which 'that man' takes narrow scope. When used in a context in which the referent of 'that man' is a contingently existing objection, the demonstrative-wide-scope reading is true on King's view, but the demonstrative-narrow-scope reading is false. But, I claimed, this is incorrect. (8) is unambiguously true in such contexts.

King replies that my sentence (8) does not provide a good test for scope ambiguity and quantifier-hood. He points out that (9) is just like (8), except that in place of ‘that man’ it contains a phrase that everyone agrees is a quantifier phrase.

9. It could have been the case that someone who is actually here now failed to exist. Yet it is hard to hear a narrow-scope reading of (9) on which it is false. So King (in effect) says that if we rely on the *sentential context* ‘It could have been the case that ____ failed to exist’ to test whether a phrase is a quantifier phrase, we get incorrect results.⁹

I agree that it is difficult to hear a false reading of (9). So it would be good to find a different sentential context in which it is easier to hear different scopes for ‘someone who is actually here now’. If we can find such a sentential context, then we can use it to test whether ‘that man’ exhibits scope ambiguities. To find another such sentential context, it might be useful to ask why it is hard to hear a scope ambiguity in (9). Consider (10).

10. It could have been the case that some man failed to exist.

(10) uses the same sentential context as (8) and (9). Yet it is easy to hear a false, quantifier-narrow-scope reading for (10). So why is it difficult to hear a false quantifier-narrow-scope reading for (9)? I speculate that the difficulty has to do with the moods of the verbs in (9).

(Thanks to Nathan Salmon for suggesting this to me.) The copula in the quantifier phrase

⁹King presents his reply in the form of a parody. He does not say whether (a) there is no narrow-scope reading of (8) or (b) it exists but is hard to hear for pragmatic reasons. In the rest of his reply, he usually attributes missing readings to pragmatics. If the alleged reading is missing because of pragmatics, we should be able to create a discourse-context in which it is natural to hear a narrow-scope reading of ‘that man’ in (8), and the sentence should seem false to us in such discourses. King does not try to provide such a discourse. Similar points hold for King’s (9): he does not say whether it is unambiguous or instead ambiguous with a pragmatically hard-to-hear narrow-scope reading.

‘someone who is actually here now’ is in the indicative mood; it matches the mood of the phrase ‘it could have been the case that’, also in the indicative mood. The verb ‘failed’, however, is in the subjunctive mood (indicated by past tense), suggesting that it takes scope under the modal operator. This mismatch promotes a tendency to read the quantifier phrase with wide scope over the modal operator. Let us call this the *Mismatched Moods Hypothesis*. The Mismatched Moods Hypothesis seems to be confirmed by (10), for the quantifier phrase in (10) does not contain a verb in indicative mood, and it is easy to hear it with the quantifier taking narrow scope. Notice that the alleged quantifier ‘that man’ also does not contain a verb in the indicative mood. So if the Mismatched Moods Hypothesis is correct, and there is nothing other than mood that makes the alleged narrow-scope reading difficult to hear in (8), then it should be possible to hear a scope-ambiguity in (8). And yet we do not hear its alleged narrow-scope reading. Of course, a defender of King’s theory might hold that there is something else that makes it difficult to hear.

Now that we have the Mismatched Mood Hypothesis before us, we can find a sentential context that everyone will agree provides a good test for scope ambiguity. We can begin by finding a sentence that is like (9) but in which the moods of the verbs match. (11) is one such sentence, for in it all of the verbs are cast into the past tense or subjunctive mood.

11. It could have been the case that someone who was actually here now failed to exist.

I find it fairly easy to hear a narrow-scope reading of this sentence. Even easier is (12), in which all verbs are in the present tense and indicative mood.

12. It could have been the case that someone who is actually here now fails to exist.

Easiest of all is (13), in which ‘doesn’t exist’ substitutes for ‘fails to exist’ (I use the contraction

‘doesn’t’ to encourage us to keep the negation in narrowest scope).

13. It could have been the case that someone who is actually here now doesn’t exist.

I think that the false reading of (13), in which the quantifier takes narrow scope, is rather prominent. I can similarly hear a false narrow scope reading for (14).

14. It could have been the case that the thing who is actually a man and identical with George W. Bush doesn’t exist.

We have now found a sentential environment (‘It could have been the case that _____ doesn’t exist’, with all verbs in the ‘that’-clause in present tense and indicative mood) that promotes, or at least allows, scope ambiguities for quantifier phrases, even for quantifiers that contain ‘actually’, such as ‘someone who is actually here now’. Thus if ‘that man’ is a quantifier of the sort that King’s theory says it is, then (15) should be scope ambiguous, and its false narrow-scope reading should be rather easy to hear.

15. It could have been the case that that man doesn’t exist.

Yet (15) seems unambiguous and true in contexts in which the referent is a contingent object. I conclude that King’s theory remains vulnerable to an objection from modal existence sentences, including (7a) and (15).

King claims that all of the other sentential contexts that I used in sections 3 and 4 of “Problems” are defective in the same way as that in (8): it is difficult to hear narrow-scope readings of quantifier phrases in those sentential contexts. I disagree in some cases. In other cases, the narrow-scope reading for quantifier phrases may be difficult to hear, but I am happy to substitute sentential contexts with uniform moods, and I think that the narrow-scope readings are

available.¹⁰ Yet I think that in all of these cases, there is no false reading in which ‘that man’ takes narrow scope.

A defender of King’s view could reply that ‘that man’ has a stronger tendency to take wide scope than (other) quantifier phrases. But if the alleged narrow-scope readings are so difficult to hear, then we should consider whether ‘that man’ is really a quantifier phrase. I attribute the absence of the alleged narrow scope readings to the directly-referential nature of complex demonstratives. Direct reference theories say that complex demonstratives are obstinate rigid designators. They predict that there are no narrow-scope readings of sentences containing complex demonstratives. (More accurately: if the sentences are scope ambiguous, then the wide-scope and narrow-scope readings are modally equivalent, just as with (5).) Clearly, it is important to King’s theory that there be sentences in which it is easy to hear a narrow-scope reading for complex demonstratives. King thinks that there are such examples. We will consider them later.

3. The Modal Reference Failure Objection and the Modal NDNS Objection

Suppose that Karen believes, on general grounds, that there is exactly one spy behind her.

¹⁰See King’s note 20. I agree with him that narrow-scope readings of his (27’) and (27’’) are difficult to hear. I attribute this to mismatched moods. I am afraid that I disagree with him in all of his other cases: I think that the narrow scope readings are (at least) available for all of them. These clashes in intuitions are unfortunate. Readers will have to judge for themselves. King says (at the end of his note 20) that it is important to use informants without views or commitments in philosophy of language. I agree, but neither should we rely on naive informants who are unaccustomed to looking for scope ambiguities. Sometimes even sophisticated informants may need to think about deductive consequences in order to discover truth conditions and scope ambiguities. For instance, sophisticated informants may not notice that King’s (32’) and (32’’) (in his note 20) are false at all worlds until they realize that they logically entail ‘Someone fails to exist’.

Without looking behind her she utters (16).

16. It could have been the case that that spy behind me wore a blue hat.

But there is no spy behind her. I say that the semantic content of (16) in her context is not true (it is either false, or neither true nor false). On King's (2001) view, Karen's utterance of (16) is an NDNS use, and so on its narrow scope reading it expresses, in her context, a proposition that is modally equivalent to the proposition that (17) expresses in her context, when the definite description is read with narrow scope.

17. It could have been the case that the spy behind me wore a blue hat.

This latter proposition is true. Yet it is hard to hear a true reading of (16).¹¹

King replies (section 4) that the sentential context of (16) does not provide a good test for quantifier-hood. He claims that it is very difficult to hear (17) with narrow scope, though it contains an obvious quantifier phrase where (16) contains a complex demonstrative. He similarly thinks that it is difficult to hear (18) and (19) with narrow scope readings on which they are true.

18. It could have been the case that the spy behind me now wore a blue hat.

19. It could have been the case that every spy behind me now wore a blue hat.

My intuitions clash with King's here, for I find it relatively easy to get the narrow scope readings

¹¹King (section 4) says that if Karen uses (16) with a *haecceitistic intention*, then the semantic content of (16) in her context is neither true nor false. This does not directly address my objection, for on King's view Karen could reasonably use (16) with a NDNS intention, and in that case the semantic content of (16) would be true in her context. I claim that there is no such use or context. Moreover, King's claim that Karen can use (16) with a haecceitistic intention is hard (for me) to reconcile with his arguments against direct-reference theories that rely on claims about NDNS uses, such as his 'genius' argument in his 2001, 3-4. See Braun forthcoming a, section 7.

of (17)-(19). Regardless, I think there are discourse contexts that strongly encourage narrow scope readings of (18) and (19). But in such discourse contexts, it is very difficult to hear the alleged narrow scope reading of (16). Consider, for instance, the discourse in (20).

20. (Scene: Karen, Erica, and Wendy are sitting at a table in a coffee shop. There is no one near them. Karen says the following.)

There are no spies or DEA agents here now, but there could have been, and each of us could have had one or more spies or DEA agents behind her *right now*. It could have been the case that some DEA agent behind Erica now wore a green jacket. It could have been the case that every spy behind Wendy now wore white shoes.

If we follow (20) with (17), (18), or (19), we can easily get the (true) reading on which the quantifier phrases take narrow scope. However, (10) would still sound strange after (20).

I also presented a modal objection to King's view about NDNS uses. On King's view, an NDNS use of (21) has a narrow scope reading on which it is true, because its content is modally equivalent to that of (22), on a reading in which the definite description takes narrow scope.

21. It could not have been the case that that red table in Fred's living room was completely green.

22. It could not have been the case that the red table in Fred's living room was completely green.

However, there does not seem to be a true reading of (21). In reply, King says that it is hard to get a true reading of (22), so (naturally) it is also hard to get a true reading of (21). Once again, I find it relatively easy to hear a true reading of (22). I could make this reading of (22) easier to

hear by setting up a discourse context, but such a discourse context would not make the alleged narrow scope reading of (21) available.

4. The Modal NDNS Inexplicit Content Objection

King's theory says that NDNS uses of complex demonstratives sometimes have inexplicit contents in some contexts (that is, they express descriptive contents that cannot be attributed to any words in the complex demonstratives). I argued that this has odd modal consequences. Imagine that Larry is a lobbyist who hears that exactly one Senator is testifying in favor of lobbying reform. He has not heard the Senator named. He then utters (23) while "having no particular Senator in mind".

23. That Senator will get no money from me.

On King's view, if Larry has the intentions described above, then his use of 'that Senator' is an NDNS use, and (23) in his context semantically expresses a proposition that is modally equivalent to (24).

24. The Senator who is testifying in favor of lobbying reform will get no money from Larry.

Imagine now that Larry continues to speak and utters (25).

25. It is necessarily true that that Senator (if he exists) is testifying in favor of lobbying reform.

On King's view, if Larry utters (25) with the above-described intentions, then (25), on its narrow scope reading, semantically expresses, in his context, a proposition that is modally equivalent to (26).

26. It is necessarily true that the Senator who is testifying in favor of lobbying reform (if he exists) is testifying in favor of lobbying reform.

(26) is ambiguous, and expresses a true proposition, on its narrow scope reading. But (25) seems unambiguous, and false in his context, no matter what intentions Larry had when he uttered it.

King replies in two parts. In the first part, he says that my short description of the case distorts our intuitions. He thinks that if the case is described in such a way that it is clear that Larry's audience is aware of his thoughts and intentions, then we will judge that (25) is ambiguous, and false in his context on the narrow-scope reading. King presents other examples, such as his astronomers example and his hominid example, which he thinks supports his claim.

But on King's view a description of Larry's *audience* should not be necessary for us to have intuitions about the semantic content of (25) in his context, for King's view says that Larry's intentions determine the semantic content of (25) in a context, and we readers are aware of his relevant intentions. We can imagine that Larry utters (25) while in his office by himself. In that case, he has no audience (other than himself) and yet the sentence has a descriptive content in his context, on King's view. More generally, we can usually judge whether sentences (in contexts) are ambiguous without knowing anything about an audience. We made such ambiguity judgments about certain sentences earlier in this paper.

But let me waive that point. I can describe a context in which Larry's audience knows quite a bit about his intentions, and yet I think our judgments run contrary to King's theory.

27. (Scene: Larry Lobbyist is both a lobbyist and a philosophy tutor. Bob is his lobbying assistant. Larry is in his office discussing modal metaphysics with some of his students. Bob is in the next room.)

Larry: “Some truths are necessarily true. It is necessarily true that every red thing is red. It is necessarily true that George W. Bush is human, if he exists. Equivalently, it is not possible for Bush to exist and not be human.”

Bob: [Enters room] “I’m sorry to interrupt, Mr. Lobbyist, but I just heard that a Senator is testifying in favor of lobbying reform. So far there is only one such Senator.”

Larry: “How despicable. That Senator will get no money from me. Notice, students, that it is necessarily true that that Senator testifies in favor of lobbying reform, if he exists. Equivalently, it is not possible for that Senator to exist and not testify in favor of lobby reform.”

In my opinion, sentence (25) in Larry’s context above still seems unambiguous and false.

I grant that Larry may communicate some descriptive information when he utters (25). If his students were asked ‘Who is Larry talking about?’, they would say ‘He is talking about the Senator who testified in favor of lobby reform’. Larry probably conveys the proposition that the Senator who is testifying in favor of lobbying reform is such that, necessarily, he testifies in favor of lobbying reform, if he exists. He may even pragmatically convey the semantic content of (26), on its narrow scope reading, though his hearers do not focus on that proposition. I similarly suspect that in some of the other cases that King describes, particularly the hominid case, some descriptive propositions are pragmatically conveyed. My intuitions do not run as King predicts, but insofar as others’ intuitions do, I think that they are best explained by supposing that the utterances of the sentences pragmatically convey propositions that are semantically expressed by sentences containing definite descriptions.

In the second part of his reply, King says that there are reasons, independent of his theory, to predict that it will be difficult to hear a reading of (25) in which the inexplicit content takes narrow scope. He compares (25) with elliptical sentences containing the verbs ‘finish’ and ‘prefer’. (I use ‘elliptical’ here in a pre-theoretic sense.) I am unsure whether the elliptical sentences that King uses really do semantically express truths in the contexts he considers. Perhaps these sentences semantically express incomplete propositions, but can be used to assert and convey full propositions (see Bach 2006 for a defense of such a view). In any case, I believe that our intuitions about such sentences differ from our intuitions about (25). It is easy to think of contexts in which we judge straight off that King’s elliptical sentences are being used to assert truths, but it is more difficult to think of such contexts for (25).

Obviously, there is a large issue lurking in the background here: Should the judgments we have been discussing be explained by semantics or pragmatics? I discuss this question in “Singular” and in the last section of “Problems.” But the only way to answer this question is to test large packages of semantic-and-pragmatic hypotheses against many examples.

5. The Attitudes and Actuality Objection

In “Problems” I presented a Fitch-Soames style objection to King’s view (Fitch 1981; Soames 2002, 39-46). Sally points at Matti and assertively utters (28).

28. That man is smart.

On King’s view, if she is being literal, then she asserts a proposition partly concerning the actual world. In another possible world w , whose most salient difference from the actual world is the presence of a few more electrons in the Andromeda galaxy, Sally also points at Matti and

assertively and literally utters (28), with (seemingly) exactly the same intentions that she has in the actual world. On King's view, she asserts a proposition partly concerning *w*. Therefore, she asserts different propositions in these worlds, though the only salient difference between them is in the Andromeda galaxy. I claimed that this was counter-intuitive. I can summarize the central claim of my objection with (29).

29. It is possible for Sally to utter (28) and (in doing so) to assert exactly the same propositions that she actually asserts when she actually utters (28), though there are a few more electrons in the Andromeda Galaxy than there actually are.

King replies to a somewhat different Fitch-Soames-style objection from Jason Stanley (2002). In reply to that objection, King says that agents can believe propositions containing constituents of which they are unaware, such as times, frames of reference, and height standards. I am unsure whether King's examples are examples of this sort (all of them are controversial). But in any case, my objection, unlike Stanley's, concerns assertion rather than belief. More importantly, my objection does not rely on the claim that speakers cannot believe or assert propositions containing constituents of which they are unaware. My objection instead turns on claims like (29), which concern whether speakers assert the same propositions in different circumstances. (Notice that a defender of King's view cannot claim that the complex demonstratives in (29) take wide scope, for the complex demonstratives in (29) are mentioned, not used.)

I also said that King's view incorrectly entails that (30) and (31) are false in certain contexts, on the readings in which the complex demonstratives take narrowest scope.

30. It could have been the case that Sally asserted that that man is smart though there were a few more electrons than there actually are.

31. If you hadn't interrupted me, I would have told you that that apple is badly bruised.

In reply to these examples, King again appeals to an alleged strong tendency for complex demonstratives to take wide scope. On readings of (30) and (31) in which each complex demonstrative takes wide scope with respect to its sentence (or with respect to its attitude verb), the sentences are true in the imagined contexts. But I believe that I could set up a discourse context in which narrow scope readings for genuine quantifiers are preferred (as I did with previous examples). Regardless, an alternative explanation of our intuitions is that the complex demonstratives are directly referential.¹²

¹²In note 45, King asks us to consider sentences (C1) and (C2).

(C1) If you had asked me about it a year ago, I would have said that Aristotle was a philosopher.

(C2) If we had been discussing basketball players, I would have (still) said that Glenn is tall.

These are similar to my (30) and (31), and seem true in the contexts that King considers, but King says that they are probably false in those contexts. This is evidence, King thinks, that my (30) and (31) merely appear to be true in their contexts, but are really false in their contexts (on their narrow scope readings). However, I disagree with King about the (probable) truth values of (C1) and (C2) in the contexts he considers. King thinks that (C1) is false in the context he considers because it contains an occurrence of (A) (= King's (22)).

(A) Aristotle was a philosopher.

King holds that (A) in a context *c* semantically expresses a proposition that contains the time of *c* as a constituent. That is apparently why he thinks that (C1) is false in the context he considers (see the argument surrounding his (22'), section 7). Notice, however, that (A) occurs inside an occurrence of an attitude ascription in (C1). But a plausible King-style theory of tense must deny that the semantic content, in a context *c*, of an occurrence of (A) *inside an attitude ascription* always has the time of *c* as a constituent. Consider the ascription 'Some medieval philosopher asserted that Aristotle was a philosopher' and an actual-world context in 2008. This ascription expresses a true proposition in this context, but surely no medieval philosopher asserted a proposition about a time in 2008. (My reasoning here parallels King's argument near his sentence (22').) I also think that (C2) is true in the context that King considers, on the sort of view of 'tall' that he assumes. Suppose that sentences containing 'tall' semantically express, in a context *c*, propositions concerning a height standard in *c*. A reasonable speaker who uttered (C2) would intend to assert a proposition about height standards appropriate for basketball players.

6. The Objection from Attitude Ascriptions and Non-Redundant NDNS Uses

I argued that King's view of NDNS uses entails that certain says-ascriptions are false, when in fact they are true. Consider Larry the lobbyist again and his utterance of (32) while having no particular Senator in mind.

32. That Senator will get no money from me.

On King's view, Larry's use of 'that Senator' is an NDNS use, and (32) in Larry's context semantically expresses a proposition that is modally equivalent to that expressed by (33).¹³

33. The Senator who testified in favor of lobbying reform will get no money from Larry.

Suppose that the Senator who testified in favor of lobbying reform also was also the sole Senator who cursed at the Vice-President on that day. Tom hears that exactly one Senator cursed at the Vice President, though that Senator's name has not been mentioned to him. He has not heard about the testimony for lobbying reform. He hears that Larry uttered (32). He falsely believes that Larry heard about the curse and he falsely believes that Larry uttered (32) because of the curse. So Tom utters (34), while having no particular Senator "in mind."

Hence the context determined by his intentions would have a height-standard appropriate for basketball players. (C2) would be true in this sort of context. This would be so even if the speaker's immediately preceding intentions had concerned height-standards for jockeys, for his shift in intentions would have determined a new context.

¹³I also said that if Larry utters (32), then 'Larry said that you would get no money from him' is true when addressed to the Senator who testified for lobbying reform. King admits that we might have this intuition, but thinks it is unreliable, for in parallel cases we also have the intuition that a says-report containing an embedded occurrence of 'you' is true, when in fact it is false. King gives examples involving the mayor of Los Angeles (his M1) and Glenn and his brothers (his S1"). I am inclined to agree with King that the reports in these cases are false, and that we might initially judge them to be true. But I think that our intuitions about such cases become mixed once we reflect on them a bit. I believe that we have no such mixed intuitions in my case.

34. Larry said that that Senator will get no money from him.

Tom's use of the complex demonstratives is NDNS, so on King's view (34) in his context semantically expresses roughly the same proposition as (35).¹⁴

35. Larry said that the Senator who cursed at the VP will get no money from him. (35) is false. Yet (34) seems to be true, in Tom's context, even though Tom's reasons for thinking it true were incorrect. Tom, so to speak, accidentally utters a sentence whose semantic content is true.¹⁵

King (section 9) seemingly agrees that we have the intuition that (34) is true in Tom's context, given my description of the context. But he thinks that I under-describe the case and thereby distort our intuitions about it. King gives a more elaborate description of a context (involving two television news programs) in which Tom utters (34), and he thinks that we will judge that (34) is false in such a context. I doubt that the details of the sort that King provides in his description of a context are necessary to judge whether (34) is true in the context I describe. In any case, here is a more elaborate description that makes clear that the audience is aware of Tom's thoughts and intentions, but which favors my judgments.

36. (Scene: Tom is with Bob, Larry's assistant. They are watching television as

¹⁴Strictly speaking, King's view says that (34) and (35) express different propositions. For a more accurate description of the proposition expressed by (35), see "Problems", section 10, sentence (72).

¹⁵I am inclined to think that the semantic content of 'that Senator' is the same individual Senator in both Larry's and Tom's contexts. If so, then the content of (32) in both Larry's and Tom's contexts is a singular proposition, and so (34) is true in Tom's context. However if 'that Senator' has no semantic content in Larry's context, then it has none in Tom's context, and the content of (32) in Larry's and Tom's contexts is a gappy proposition, and so (34) is again true in Tom's context.

Jones, a reporter for CNN, speaks from the Senate office building. Tom has not yet heard of either the testimony or the curse. Larry has heard of the testimony but not the curse. Bob has heard of both and knows that the same Senator was involved in both.)

CNN: Jones: “I am in the hallways of the Senate office building, and I have heard a report that one, but only one, Senator cursed at the Vice-President during a Senate session today. The news is racing around the halls here. Wait a moment, I see Larry Lobbyist way off in the distance. He has surely heard the news. Let’s ask him for his reaction. He’s now within earshot. Mr. Lobbyist, what do you think of today’s unusual Senatorial behavior?”

Larry: “That Senator acted despicably and will get no money from me, and I will urge other lobbyists to support his opponent in the upcoming election.”

Tom: “Did you hear that, Bob? Larry said that that Senator would get no money from him.”

Bob: “Yes, Larry did say that, but he didn’t say it for the reason that you think he did. He said it because he heard that exactly one Senator was testifying in favor of lobbying reform. He never heard about the curse. It turns out, though, that the Senator who testified in favor of lobbying reform is also the Senator who cursed at the VP.”

(34) seems true, in the context in which Tom utters it. Bob seems right to accept it, but also right to explain how Tom’s reasons for thinking it true are incorrect. Tom’s utterance of ascription

(34) may be misleading in the above context. If it is, that is because Tom pragmatically conveys some false propositions with his utterance of (34). But I think that we (and Bob in the example) have the simultaneous intuition that Tom's ascription is, strictly speaking, true. (Tom has, so to speak, accidentally come to assert a truth.) I hold similar views about King's elaborately described cases involving Tom and (34).

7. Do Complex Demonstratives Ever Take Narrow Scope?

King repeatedly says (sections 5 and 7) that complex demonstratives have a strong tendency to take wide scope with respect to modal operators, negation, and attitude verbs, and so have a strong tendency not to be heard with narrow scope. This occurs, he says, because speakers use the predicative material in complex demonstratives to enable their audiences to focus on the things that the speakers wish to talk about. All of this is consistent with direct reference theories, for direct reference theories predict that sentences containing complex demonstratives lack the alleged quantifier-like narrow scope readings,¹⁶ and one of the main motivations for direct-reference theories is that speakers use complex demonstratives as referring terms, and use the predicative material in them to guide their hearers' attention. It is therefore important for an advocate of King's view to find cases in which complex demonstratives clearly have quantifier-like narrow scope readings. King acknowledges this and argues that there are such cases. I think our intuitions about his cases do not always run as he says they do. Insofar as

¹⁶More explicitly: on direct-reference theories, if sentences containing complex demonstratives are scope ambiguous, then the scope disambiguations are modally equivalent. On King's theory, the wide and narrow scope readings are often not modally equivalent. Below I argue that the sentences that King considers do not have narrow-scope readings with the truth conditions that King claims they have.

they go King's way, I think they are better explained by pragmatics than semantics.

King's first case of a narrow-scope use (at the end of his section 5) has Scott randomly picking numbers. He picks an even number, and Greg afterwards utters (37) (= King's (11')).

37. That last number that Scott picked could have been even instead of odd.

King says that (37) strikes us as true in Greg's context. But (37) is true in Greg's context only if 'that last number that Scott picked' is non-rigid in Greg's context and takes narrow scope with respect to the modal operator. I think that, insofar as we tend to hear (37) as true (I can easily hear it as false), this is due to pragmatics. The common noun phrase 'last number that Scott picked' is uniquely identifying, so it is natural to take Greg to be *saying* that *the* last number that Scott picked could have been even instead of odd (with narrow scope for the description), though (37) in his context does not semantically express that proposition.¹⁷ I say the same about King's (38) (his number 15a, in his section 6) in the context he describes.

38. Necessarily, that hominid who invented the wheel, if he exists, invented the wheel.

Insofar as we judge that this sentence is true in this context (I do not), it is partly due to the use of a uniquely identifying common noun phrase ('hominid who invented the wheel') which allows utterances of (38) to convey the semantic content of (39), on the narrow scope reading of the definite description.

39. Necessarily, the hominid who invented the wheel, if he exists, invented the wheel.

There's another reason why we might judge (38) to be true in some contexts: the sentence

¹⁷Greg may use the complex demonstrative, rather than the corresponding definite description, because it is more emphatic (see "Singular," section 9.4).

embedded in (38) is true in all contexts. This may promote the tendency to think that (38) itself is true.

Consider next King's example of Sherry. She works for Chanticleer. She has long believed that Alan hates her and she has just learned that he has become CEO of Chanticleer. She begins to mope. When someone asks King 'Why is Sherry moping?', he utters (40).

40. Sherry believes that guy who was just named CEO of Chanticleer hates her. King says that (40) explains Sherry's behavior. But on the reading in which the complex demonstrative takes wide scope, it (roughly speaking) merely attributes to Sherry the belief that Alan hates her, and this does not explain her current behavior, King thinks, for she has long believed that Alan hates her. Thus only on its narrow scope reading does (40) explain her behavior, King says.

King's argument may implicitly rely on certain dubious, but rather widely-held, assumptions about explanation. I criticize such assumptions in Braun (2001), where I describe how they are used in arguments against Millianism. (I allude to some of the problems with these assumptions below.) Neale (2007) discusses King's argument from Sherry at length; I urge those who are interested to read Neale's paper. I will here merely touch on some of the problems with the argument.

Let us consider whether (40), on its alleged King-ian wide-scope reading, fails to explain Sherry's behavior. On its King-ian wide scope reading, (40) expresses roughly the same proposition as the true ascription (41).

41. The thing that actually is identical with Alan and been named CEO of Chanticleer is such that Sherry believes that he hates her.

(41) attributes to Sherry belief in the singular proposition that Alan hates her. So let us consider whether (42) explains Sherry's behavior.

42. Sherry believes that Alan hates her.

Sherry's belief that Alan hates her is a proximate cause of her behavior. So (42) provides substantial information about the causes of her behavior. So it provides substantial explanatory information about her behavior. Moreover, some inquirers who utter 'Why is Sherry moping?' will be quite satisfied with (42) as an answer. For instance, an inquirer who knows that Sherry believes that Alan is the new CEO, but does not know that she believes that Alan hates her, will find (42) explanatory. I conclude that (42) explains Sherry's behavior. Therefore, (41) also explains Sherry's behavior, and therefore so does (40) on its alleged King-ian wide scope reading. And so does the proposition that (40) semantically expresses according to direct reference theories, for this is the same as that expressed by (42).¹⁸

However, some inquirers who utter 'Why is Sherry moping?' will not be satisfied with (42) as an answer. Consider, for instance, an inquirer of the sort that King seems to have in mind, one who already knows that Sherry believes that Alan hates her, but does not know that Alan has become CEO. This sort of inquirer will be unsatisfied with (42), and might even

¹⁸One might be tempted to object that (42) cannot explain Sherry's behavior because it does not describe a set of causally sufficient conditions for her behavior. But a sentence can explain an event without describing a set of causally sufficient conditions for it. (See Lewis 1986 for arguments that support this claim.) In any case, King cannot endorse this objection, because there is no King-ian reading of (40) on which it describes a set of causally sufficient conditions for Sherry's behavior, and yet King says that it explains her behavior.

incorrectly think that (42) does not explain her behavior.¹⁹ Such an inquirer may also think that (40) (better) explains Sherry's behavior. But he may do so because speakers who utter (40) typically pragmatically convey more information than (40) semantically expresses.²⁰ A sincere and literal speaker will utter (40) only if he believes that Alan was just named CEO of Chanticleer. So an utterance of (40) is likely to pragmatically convey that Alan was just named CEO. So an inquirer who hears (40), and thinks that Sherry is well-informed about Chanticleer's management, is likely to infer that Sherry believes that Alan was just named CEO. Now assume that (40) semantically expresses the proposition that Sherry believes that Alan hates her (as direct-reference theorists say). An inquirer who hears (40) will entertain the semantically expressed proposition as well as the preceding pragmatically conveyed and inferred propositions. Such an inquirer could put all of these bits of information together, along with further assumptions about Sherry's other beliefs and desires, and infer that she is likely to be worried and that this is causing her to mope. This sort of inquirer may find (40) highly explanatory. All of these claims about pragmatics and explanation are consistent with direct-reference theories. I conclude that direct reference theorists can easily account for uses of (40) to explain Sherry's behavior.

The Philip Roth case (which King credits to Michael McGlone) uses a uniquely identifying common noun phrase in its complex demonstrative. In the context that King

¹⁹This might explain why King thinks that if he had uttered (42) in response to the query then there would be "a feeling that I have not *fully* explained Sherry's behavior" (my italics). King seemingly assumes that his (hypothetical) inquirer knows the proposition expressed by (42), but does not know that Sherry believes that Alan has become CEO.

²⁰I am indebted to Neale 2007, especially pp. 120-121, in the remainder of this paragraph.

imagines, an utterance of the belief ascription pragmatically conveys the proposition that Rachel does not know that the man in the corner is a great novelist. This pragmatically conveyed proposition is true, and explains her behavior. In other respects, the example is a Frege-puzzle of a sort that direct-reference theorists have addressed in many places (Salmon 1986, Braun 1998, Soames 2002).

In King's original example of Donnie (section 7 and King 2001, 114-116), Donnie utters (43) as he points at the transvestite Tim.

43. That woman is beautiful.

Edgar observes Donnie's utterance, but believes that Tim is not a woman. Someone asks Edgar what Donnie said, and Edgar utters (44) while pointing at Tim.

44. Donnie said that that woman is beautiful.

King says that (44), in Edgar's context, seems true. King says (44) is not true in this context on a reading in which 'that woman' takes wide-scope, but it is true in Edgar's context on a reading in which 'that woman' takes narrow scope (see King's (28'a)).²¹ I think that this case is best viewed as one in which the ascriber is speaking non-literally (see Wolter 2006, 2007).²² Edgar does not assert the (literal) semantic content (if any) of (44) in his context. Rather, he utters (44) so as to convey another proposition, such as the one semantically expressed by the wordier ascription 'Donnie said that that person who appears to be a woman is beautiful' or by the direct-quotation ascription 'Donnie pointed at *him* and said "That woman is beautiful"'. In reply to this

²¹ King seemingly assumes that direct-reference theories entail that (44) is not true in Edgar's context. But this is not so for some versions of direct reference. See note 23.

²²I also think, as does Wolter (2006, 2007), that many examples of the alleged narrow-scope uses given in King 2001 are cases in which the agent is speaking non-literally.

objection, King changes the example and imagines that Edgar and his audience believe that Tim is a woman. King says that (44) seems literally true in Edgar's new context and he thinks this can be explained only by supposing that the complex demonstrative takes narrow scope. I do not share King's intuition, but if others do, then there is a plausible pragmatic explanation of their intuition that is consistent with direct reference. 'That woman' does not refer to Tim in Donnie's context. Nevertheless, when Donnie utters (43) he *speaker-refers* to Tim with 'that woman' and so he asserts the proposition that Tim is beautiful, even though (43) does not semantically express this proposition (see Braun 1994). Similarly, 'that woman' fails to (semantically) refer to Tim in Edgar's context, but if Edgar believes that Tim is a woman, then he uses 'that woman' to speaker-refer to Tim. So when Edgar utters (44), he *asserts* the true (but semantically unexpressed) proposition that Donnie said that Tim is beautiful.²³

I conclude that King's alleged examples of uses of complex demonstratives with narrow scope are not compelling. Insofar as intuitions run as he says, direct-reference theorists can plausibly use pragmatics to explain them.

I will not attempt to summarize all of the objections, replies, and counter-replies that have

²³Direct-reference theorists will disagree over whether (43) and (44) semantically express propositions in Donnie's and Edgar's contexts. On my own version of direct reference, if Tim does not (literally) satisfy the content of 'woman', then (43) semantically expresses a gappy proposition in Donnie's context. If Donnie utters (43) literally, while pointing at Tim, then he asserts that gappy proposition. (He also asserts the proposition that Tim is beautiful.) The proposition that (44) semantically expresses, in Edgar's context, says that Donnie said this gappy proposition. So (44) is true in Edgar's context. If Edgar believes that Tim is not a woman, then he may use (44) non-literally to convey some other proposition, such as the proposition that he would express by saying 'Donnie said that that person who looks like a woman is beautiful'. If Edgar believes that Tim is a woman, and utters (44) literally, then he asserts at least two true propositions: the gappy proposition that (44) semantically expresses in his context, and the (semantically unexpressed) proposition that Donnie said that Tim is beautiful.

occurred in the exchange between King and me. But I want to note that both of us rely rather heavily on pragmatics. King appeals to pragmatics to explain why sentences containing complex demonstratives often appear to have the truth conditions that direct-reference theories attribute to them; he says that there are pragmatic reasons why complex demonstratives strongly tend to take wide scope. I appeal to pragmatics to explain why some utterances of sentences containing complex demonstratives appear to have narrow-scope quantifier-like descriptive meanings. Thus both King and I appeal to pragmatics to explain some phenomena that pose problems for our semantic theories.²⁴

²⁴Thanks to Stewart Cohen (editor of *Philosophical Studies*) for offering me an opportunity to reply to King. Many thanks to Nathan Salmon for helpful discussion.

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